



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
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College & Career Readiness
Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, July 9, 2020
Zoom - Virtual Meeting
6:00 p.m.

Subcommittee Members Present:	Chairperson Andy Descoteaux, Hilary Clark and Jackie Doherty
School Committee Members Present:	Mr. Dillon, Mr. Hoey and Ms. Martin
School Department Personnel Present:	Dr. Linus Guillory, Chief Schools Officer Ms. Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer Mr. Michael Fiato, Lowell High Head of School

This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. 30A, Section 20.

Chairperson Descoteaux called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m. The following agenda item was discussed:

1. Report from New LHS Head of School on Initial Assessment of School Turnaround Plan and Recommendations to Accelerate Improvement

Chairperson Descoteaux asked Dr. Guillory to address the Subcommittee. Dr. Guillory introduced Mr. Fiato who had a PowerPoint presentation to share with the Committee. Mr. Fiato stated that he has been on the job for about a week and he's presenting his initial findings to the Committee. He stated that he did an analysis for a reentry plan. He stated that he

believes in being responsible and transparent and this plan represents that. He stated that he hasn't been able to meet the parents or many of the staff. He is excited to receive feedback from the Committee around this presentation. He stated that his plan isn't about people and he believes all the people presently in place are hard working. He stated that change is never easy. He said when he was interviewed one of the questions he was asked was that the high school was lacking organizational structure and what ideas he would put in place if he were chosen.

The agenda for the PowerPoint presentation included:

- Overview Turnaround Plan
- Data Analysis
- Current Administrative Structure
- Opportunities for Improvement
- Alternative Options
- Next Steps

Mr. Fiato then spoke about the turnaround plan. He stated that in 2018 the official accountability report from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for Lowell High School identified areas of need that affect the quality of the high school such as low subgroup performance (Asian, White, and SWD) and a low participation rate (SWD). In June 2019, Lowell High School submitted a plan, focusing on areas of improvement. The areas are as follows:

- Establish common practices that are consistent and equitable for all students by supporting shared leadership and mutual responsibility through foundational work in professional collaboration.
- Integrate intentional practices to improve teacher- specific instruction and student-responsive instruction.
- Identify specific supports and interventions informed by data to best serve student-specific needs.
- Create a safe, orderly and respectful environment for students and foster a collegial and collaborative culture among teachers.

Mr. Fiato then spoke about the 2019 graduation rates, attendance rates, MassCORE rates and out of school suspensions at Lowell High School for 2019. The report also included the current administrative structure at Lowell High School. Mr. Fiato then spoke about opportunities for improvement which he stated are options and not necessary recommendations. The opportunities for improvement are as follows:

- The reorganization proposes a shift to small learning communities, with an administrative team that fosters and supports students with evidence based practices. These practices support and promote a shift from:
 - a. compliance to engagement
 - b. from punitive to restorative
 - c. a deficit model to an asset based model
 - d. sharing information with students to including students in the decision making process

- Promote integration and alignment of instruction, support services, and resources to foster small, vibrant and supportive learning communities designed for the 21st century.
- Renewed focus on teaching and learning by supporting teacher growth, skills and a sense of belonging through increased support, feedback, and instructional coaching from principals and assistant principals within each of the small learning communities.
- Add a Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to facilitate the process for the school and community to reflect and act on relevant data to monitor progress, course correct, and accurately and effectively communicate to all stakeholders.

The PowerPoint presentation showed the following options for consideration:

Re-organize Now: Five (5) Principals, Five (5) Assistant Principals, Director of CIA, Gained cost efficiency and aligned supports for students and teachers. Cost benefit and accelerated timeline.

Phased Re-Org: Year 1 Start with Freshman Academy, Year 2 Complete re-org. Longer implementation timeline.

Stay Put: Keep the current structure in place with no change for students and staff.

Mr. Fiato again reiterated that he felt he would not be being responsible if he didn't bring these options forward. He also stated that he believes that the accelerated timeline is a pro as opposed to waiting another year. He said that the district could start with the Freshman Academy which has a lot of positives.

Ms. Doherty stated that she like the opportunities for improvement and excited to see the CIA position back. She stated that she believes the timing of this is off and reckless. She said that we are not even sure that students are coming back to school and we need to be focusing on that. She stated that Mr. Fiato needs to work with the team in place and develop a plan when you know the students and the community. She also stated that doing this during the pandemic is difficult.

Ms. Clark stated that she appreciates Ms. Doherty and Mr. Fiato and she believes that the proposal makes sense and believes that people are eager for change. She stated that the current structure is not working and that we should not continue in the current structure and she supports the idea.

Mr. Descoteaux stated that he supports both of his colleagues and he is leaning towards a phased in option.

Ms. Doherty stated that she doesn't want to stay put, but believes Mr. Fiato needs to respect the employees and the accelerated pace doesn't do justice to our students or staff.

Mr. Dillon stated that he thinks this sounds like a good idea and asked about losing and adding positions. He stated that Lowell High School has a great staff. He said that the budget times are crazy and the timing of this is difficult.

Mr. Hoey stated he believes we caught Lowell High School just in time and we need to do a major overhaul.

Ms. Martin stated that she appreciates the work that was done with Dr. Guillory and Ms. Desmond, but she doesn't see a responsible path forward and believes it's irresponsible to do this in six (6) weeks. She stated that there is great talent at Lowell High School. She believes Mr. Fiato needs to be part of the school community and see the strengths of the students and the staff and she doesn't believe that has been done. She also supports the CIA position returning.

Mr. Descoteaux added that he agrees with Ms. Martin and that the staff cares about the students.

Ms. Clark stated that this is about the structure and not about the people.

Ms. Doherty asked if the expectation of the positions (Deans, Student Support Services) that are being eliminated is that the affected staff can reapply for the new positions. She asked for more information.

Mr. Fiato responded yes, removing positions and replacing them and he is open for the employees to apply.

Mr. Hoey stated that we are being irresponsible if we don't do something.

Mr. Dillon agreed with Ms. Doherty and stated that the Committee needs more details.

Ms. Doherty made a motion for the administration to offer a fourth (4th) option as well as provide additional information that includes what a new re-org chart would look like with the CIA position included and a list of the positions to be eliminated under his re-org option 1; seconded by Ms. Clark. 3 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Doherty made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Clark. 3 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Linus Guillory, Chief of Schools
Officer for Dr. Joel Boyd,
Superintendent and Secretary, Lowell
School Committee

LG/mes